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ABSTRACT

This volume presents a "big picture" perspective on the charter-school movement. It provides a definition of charter schools, what they are, and where they fit on the landscape of school reform; an explanation of why charters enjoy widespread bipartisan support; a look at how charters are situated in the larger school-reform movement of the last quarter century; an analytic spotlight on the history and development of charter schools; an examination of the key dimensions of charters (choice, deregulation, decentralization, competition, and accountability); investigations of charter schools in action; and analyses of the impact of charter schools at the local and system levels. Seven chapters include: (1) "Introduction: Laying the Foundation"; (2) "History of Charter Schools"; (3) "Exploring the Charter School Architecture"; (4) "The Supporting Climate for Charter Schools"; (5) "The Embedded Logic of Charter Schools"; (6) "Expected Benefits and Possible Costs"; and (7) "Charter School Effects." It is hoped that this publication will help educators and policymakers in assessing the value and the future of charter schooling. (Contains 362 references.) (RT)

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